

Preparing for and Participating in Socratic Seminars

For CP and Honors English 11

Preparing

- Underline quotes that you can easily analyze quickly beforehand.
 - Don't write paragraphs, just quick bullet points. You want to still go along with the conversation.
- Circle or star page numbers with important quotes, so you can have easy access to them.
- Have a question ready before the discussion to keep the conversation flowing.
- Circle subject words throughout the chapter so you can strengthen your quotes with a general idea or message.
- Try to think of multiple perspectives on one topic in case another student says one of them, so you can continue the conversation from another point of view.

Participating

- Assuming that there are 5-6 topics/questions per seminar (which is about average), try to participate about once or twice per question.
 - DO NOT participate too much; remember that other people need time to get their points in, too.
- Make sure that your points are relevant to the discussion.
 - If you know what you want to say, but the topic of discussion changes, save it for later.
 - Remember, this is a discussion, not a sharing of ideas.
- Countering another student's argument is good! Not only does it give you talking points, but it also raises more questions for the entire discussion.
- Take notes during the discussion. Working hard during the discussion will pay off during essay and ASOAPStone writing.
- Finally, silence is *okay*. Instead of sitting awkwardly, silent moments in the discussion give you time to think and develop more ideas.

After a Socratic Seminar

- Take notes of ideas that you hadn't thought of that someone else might have brought up.
 - These ideas can be used in future essays or assignments.
- Find evidence to connect with the new points from other people.
 - Example: If the person sitting next to you says a quote you didn't have underlined that could relate to one of your points, underline it. Or find new quotes to support your new ideas.